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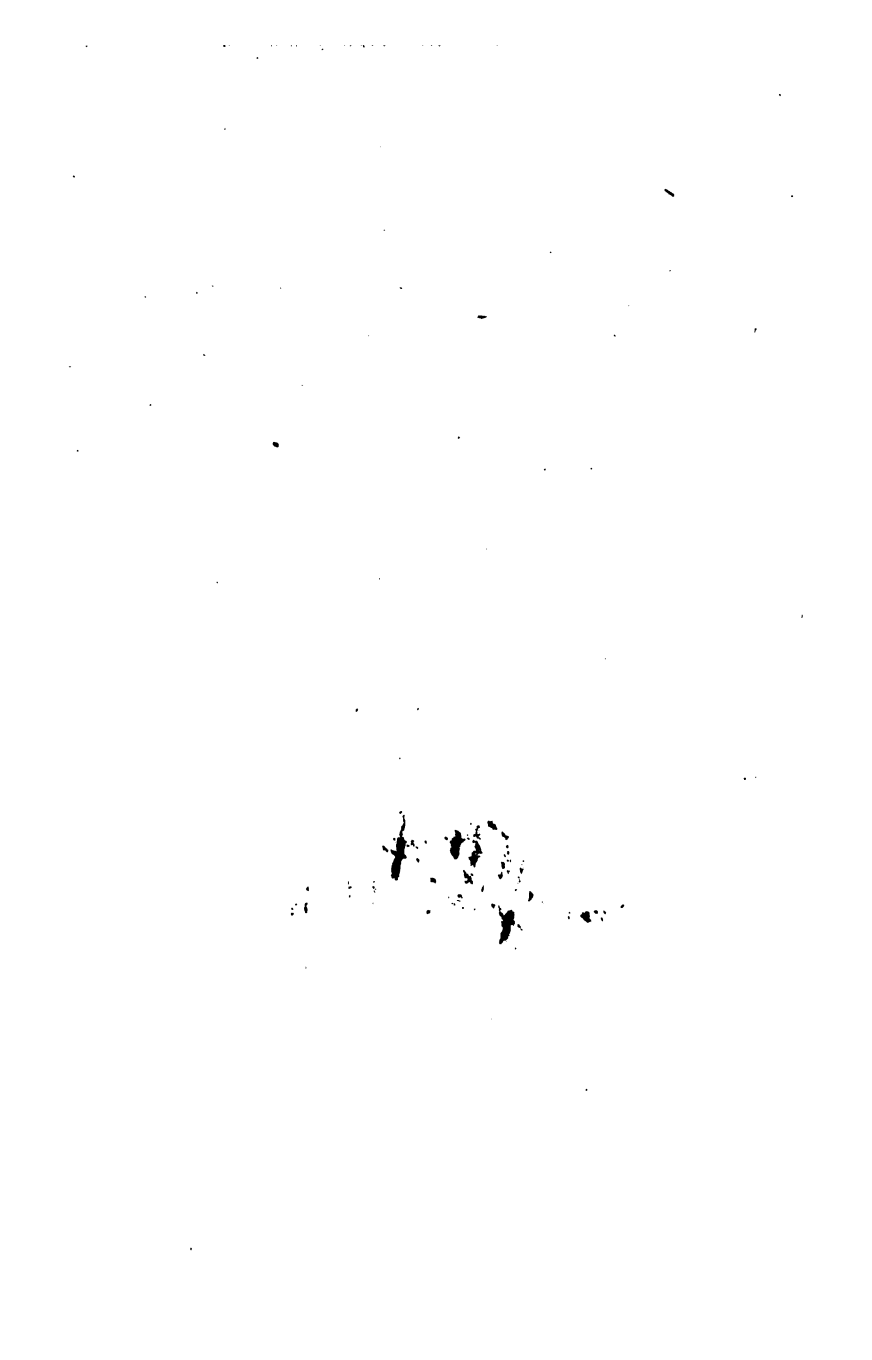
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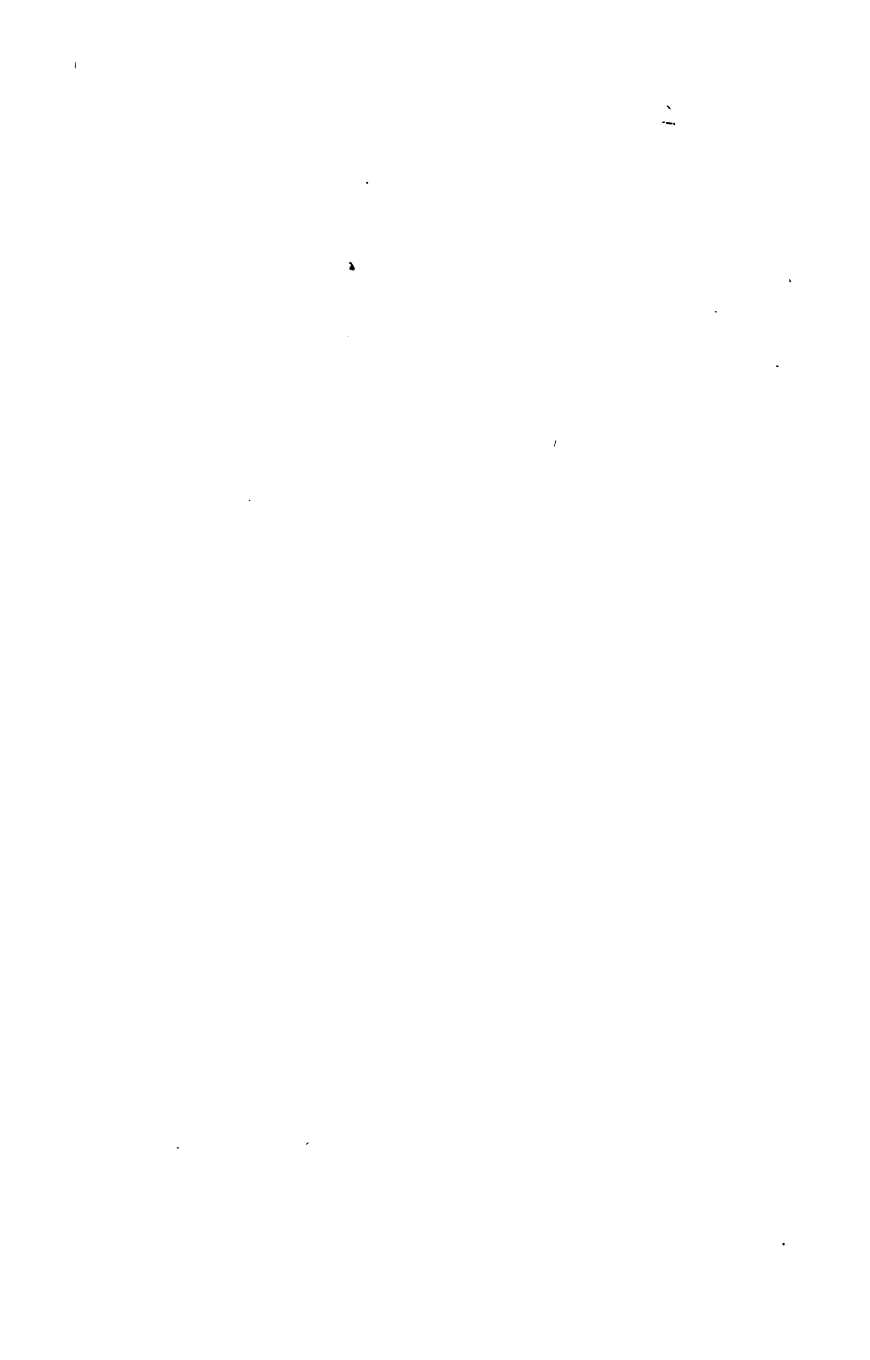


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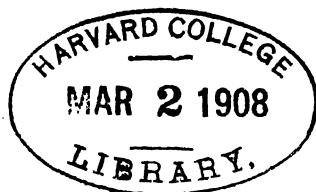
CATALOGUE
OF
MEDALS AND PLAQUES

BY
VICTOR D. BRENNER



EXHIBITED AT
THE GROLIER CLUB
MARCH 7 TO MARCH 23
1907

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*Gift of
The Grolier Club*

FOREWORD

IN the early days of this Republic great attention was paid to the production of medals, indeed, some months before the Declaration of Independence, Congress ordered a gold medal to be struck and presented to George Washington "for his wise and spirited conduct in the siege and acquisition of Boston." Later there was a series designed and struck in Paris, by order of the Continental Congress, under the supervision of Colonel David Humphreys, who, recognizing the importance of following the rules governing numismatics, asked the aid of the French Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres in the

composition of the designs. Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson and John Jay were interested in the work, Franklin as an admirer and friend of the famous medallist Dupré.

The art of Dupré, Duvivier, Gatteaux, Andrieu, Gayrard, and other notable French medallists strongly influenced our own artists and for several decades after the establishment of the Republic the importance and special value of this art continued to be recognized in this country. As late as 1846 General Winfield Scott, in a letter to Secretary of War Marcy, in relation to the medal ordered by Congress to be presented to General Zachary Taylor for his victories on the Rio Grande, expressed an appreciation of the medallists' art, which is worth quoting here. He wrote: "As medals are

among the surest monuments of history, as well as muniments of individual distinction, there should be given to them, besides intrinsic value and durability of material, the utmost grace of design with the highest finish in mechanical execution. All this is necessary to give the greater or adventitious value; as in the present instance, the medal is to be at once, an historical record and a reward of distinguished merit."

Further testimony to the importance of this branch of art, if such be needed, is found in the words of J. F. Loubat, the author of the well known "Medallic History of the United States." He wrote: "Medals, by means of the engraver's art, perpetuate in a durable form, and within a small compass which the eye can embrace at a glance, not only the features of eminent persons, but

the dates, brief accounts and representations (direct or emblematical), of events; they rank, therefore, among the most valuable records of the past when they recall men, deeds, or circumstances which have influenced the life of nations."

About the middle of the last century there appears to have been a decline in the public encouragement of the medallist. Not only in the mind of the public, but in that of the artist as well, this special art has become confused with the art of the sculptor and the canons governing numismatics have long been forgotten or ignored. The result has been that while there has always been a considerable demand for the work of competent medallists, and while this country has produced architects, sculptors and painters of world-wide reputation, no medallist

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has come to the front as a master in his profession. It is, therefore, a matter of great satisfaction to find here an artist whose taste and temperament have inclined him to choose this special branch of plastic art for his life work and who has already achieved eminence in it.

The small size of plaques and medals and the consequent difficulty of showing them to advantage in a general collection of works of art, are the chief reasons why a medallist rarely shows his work publicly, and it is only in an intimate and special exhibition like this that these productions can be studied with satisfaction.

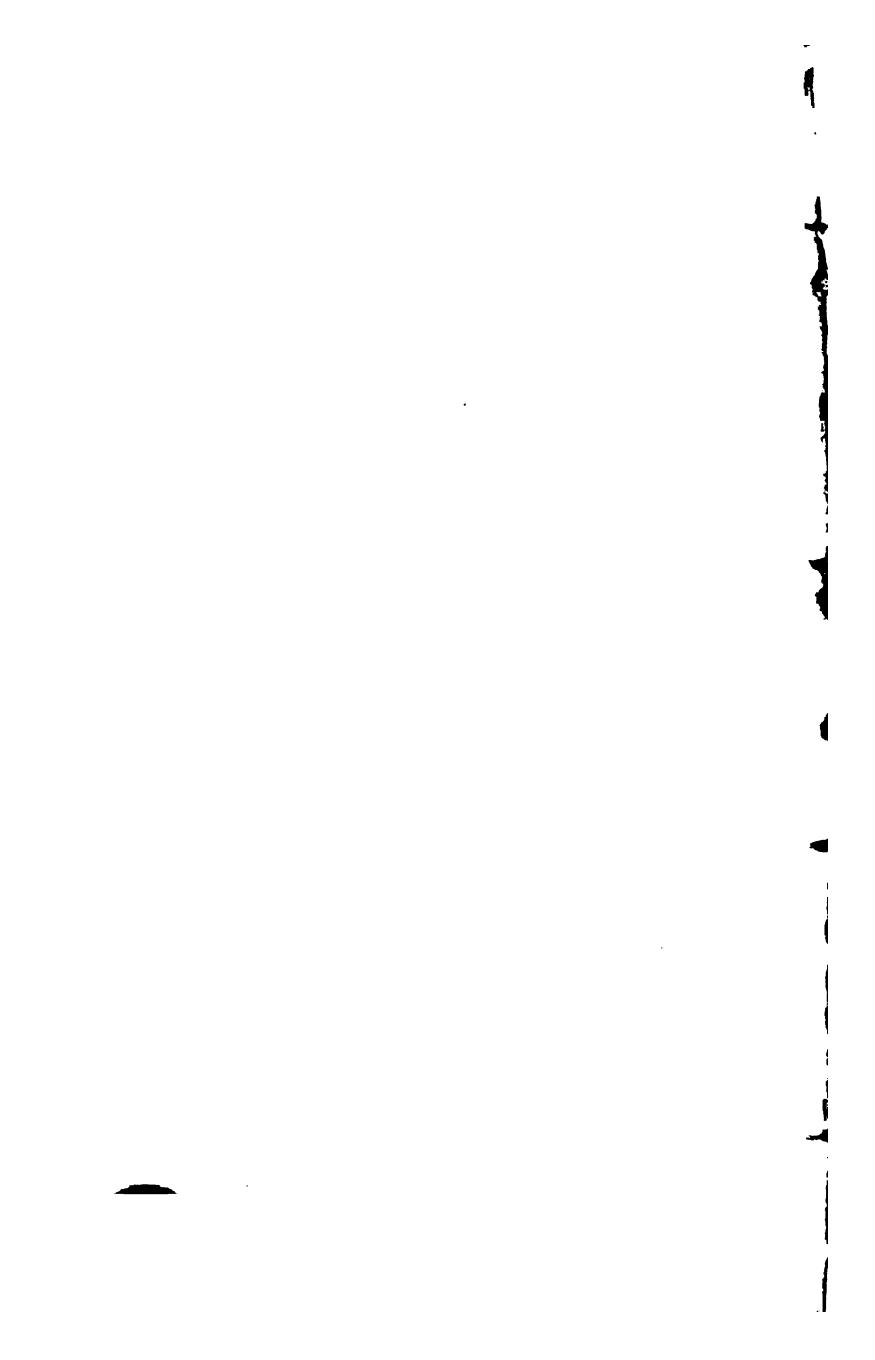
Mr. Victor D. Brenner, whose collected works are enumerated in this catalogue, was born in Shavely, Russia, in 1871, and at the age of thirteen began to work with his

father in engraving seals and in stone cutting. After three years' experience under his father's directions he left home and worked as an engraver of jewelry and a sculptor in various cities of Russia until 1890, when he came to New York and entered as a pupil, first in Cooper Union, then in the School of the National Academy of Design, and in the Art Students' League, practising his profession in the daytime and studying at night. In 1898 he went to Paris, became the pupil of Roty and studied in the Julian Academy under Peuch, Verlet and Dubois for two years. After a year's travel in Italy and Germany he returned to New York and opened a studio and in the course of three years produced a large number of plaques, medals, reliefs and busts.

The past two years he has spent

in Paris studying with Roty. His work has been shown in the exhibitions in Paris, Berlin, Munich and London and in the important exhibitions in this country. Among other distinctions he has been awarded a bronze medal in the Universal Exposition at Paris in 1900, a mention in the Salon of the same year, a bronze medal at the Buffalo Exhibition and a silver medal at the St. Louis Exhibition. He is represented in the Luxembourg Gallery in Paris by eighteen pieces, in the collection of the Mint in Paris by twelve pieces, in the Glyptothek in Munich by ten pieces, in the Boston Museum by the same number, and in the Metropolitan Museum of this city by six pieces.

F. D. MILLET.



A MEDAL has had for its object through all ages, a commemoration of an important event or of a noble personage.

In its execution may be found all the qualities that any work of art may possess in other media. Its technicalities, however, limit its design, and its size exacts extreme delicacy of execution. But for conveying a story, it has a broader scope than sculpture and like painting, admits of perspective and even of atmosphere.

After the idea is conceived sketches in soft wax are made to determine the desired relief and composition of lines. For the final model, a slate is used in order to

have an even surface; the design is then traced on it with a point, and bit by bit the wax is applied until the full modelling of the design is obtained. The wax model is made on the slate four or five times the diameter of the finished medal.

In many cases the artist will oil the surface of his wax model, make a mould of it in plaster of paris. This mould is in turn filled with plaster of paris and a positive or cameo is obtained representing the model. In other cases, after the wax model has been completed, the artist proceeds at once to translate his design into a block of soft steel, called a die. The left hand holds the die firmly in position. In the right hand is held a steel graving tool called burin which cuts into the die by the pressure of the palm, guided by the four fingers. The thumb is used as

a counterbalance on the die so as to prevent and stop pressure when it has reached the desired depth and length.

An outline sketch is first made on the face of the soft steel by the artist, carefully following the design of the medal. Then he commences to cut into the steel with his burin, producing an intaglio which eventually will be the die from which the medal is struck.

After almost every cut of the tool, the artist takes wax impressions of his die to see how the work is progressing and to note how it agrees with the original wax model.

A trained engraver's hand will in time develop an accuracy of touch that will save him many verifications by wax impressions. In leading his graver he can feel the direction of the cut or curve of line, no matter

in what depth it may be. When the hand reaches this state of sensitiveness it obviates much of the eye strain to which engravers are subject.

One interesting process made use of very often by engravers, but not generally known to the laity, is the application of so-called punches in intaglio cutting. These "punches" consist of steel bars at the ends of which are engraved in cameo, letters, forms or even parts of the design. The punches are sunk with a hammer into the die to the desired depth, thus obtaining easier results at depths not readily accessible with the graver. After completion, the die is heated to a cherry red and immersed in a basin of water from the bottom of which arises a tube carrying cold water. It is essential that the stream flowing from the tube

should meet the surface of the die immediately upon its immersion. By this process the surface of the steel is hardened to resist the pressure required in the striking of the medal.

Since the introduction of the reducing machine, the medallist has his model cast in bronze or iron, adjusts it to the machine and obtains a reduction in steel in any size desired. The reducing machine, which is a kind of pantagraph, was invented by the Frenchman Contamin early in the nineteenth century. A steel point following the model in its reliefs and cavities, transmits by means of a bar its movements to another point which cuts into the steel. This machine saves the artist much of the tedious work required in the cutting of dies by hand. It copies a model with but slight modifications

in certain places, and if due allowance has been made in the model, will need but little retouching in the die.

The striking of a medal is entirely mechanical, and is obtained by either hydraulic pressure, or the screw press. The metal disc is placed between the dies, and pressed until the full image is obtained. According to the height of the relief, it may require from one to ten or even more pressures, and annealing the metal disc each time after it has received a blow.

The medal is now ready to be colored, or as it is termed have a patine produced on it, for it must be remembered that when a medal comes from the press, it is as bright as a new penny. The patine may be obtained by burnt sienna, by liver of sulphur or salammoniac as the case

may be for the bronze. For silver, any oxide will do to give a dark background, and to relieve the surfaces, pumice stone is used with effect.

VICTOR D. BRENNER.



CATALOGUE

1

Football medal engraved directly in the dies.

Executed in New York, 1894

2

Award medal of the St. George Athletic Association cut directly in the die.

Executed in New York, 1895

3

The William Augustus Mühlenberg medal commemorating the opening

of the St. Luke's Hospital, issued by
the American Numismatic Society,
cut directly in the dies.

Executed in New York, 1896

4

Portrait plaque of E. Marblestone.

Executed in New York, 1897

5

The Cullum Geographical medal
designed by L. F. Emmet, presented
to Dr. Fr. Nansen and Lieut. Peary.

Executed in New York, 1897

6

Dollar of the Republic of St. Do-
mingo.

Executed in New York, 1897

7

Charities and Correction medal, issued by the American Numismatic Society, commemorating the 25th national conference in New York.

Executed in New York, 1898

8

Portrait plaque of George A. Lucas, Esq.

Executed in Paris, 1899

9

Portrait plaquette of Miss Stuart.

Executed in Paris, 1899

10

Portrait plaquette of C. Delacour

Executed in Paris, 1899

11

Portrait plaquette of René.

Executed in Paris, 1899

12

Souvenir plaquette presented by
Commissioner General Peck to the
officers of the World's Fair at Paris,
1900.

Executed in Paris, 1900

13

Portrait medallion of Edward B.
Fulde.

Executed in Paris, 1900

14

Portrait plaquette of J. Sanford
Saltus, Esq. Reduction.

Executed in Paris, 1900

15

Part of a binding for a catalogue of
the Walters China collection.

Executed in Paris, 1900

16

Portrait plaque of Mlle. C. at the
piano.

Executed in Paris, 1900

17

Portrait medallion of Mme. Ernest
Raynaud.

Executed in Paris, 1901

18

The George William Curtis medal
for proficiency in Public Speaking.
Columbia University.

Executed in New York, 1901

19

Portrait plaque of Jessie.
Executed in New York, 1901

20


The John Wakefield Francis medal.
First of a series to commemorate
noted citizens of New York.
Executed in New York, 1901

21

Portrait plaque of William Maxwell
Evarts, Esq.
Executed in New York, 1901

22

Reduction of the William Maxwell
Evarts plaque.
Executed in New York



23

Medal given by the State of Michigan to the Volunteers in the war with Spain and Philippine Campaign.

Executed in New York, 1902

24

The Illig medal in Applied Science, Columbia University.

Executed in New York, 1902

25

Medal presented to Prince Henry of Prussia by the American Numismatic Society in commemoration of his visit to America.

Executed in New York, 1902

26

Award medal of the Lake George
Regatta Association.

Executed in New York, 1902

27

Plaque presented to Theodore L.
De Vinne, Esq., at the annual din-
ner of the Typothetae of New York.

Executed in New York, 1902

28

Anniversary plaque of the firm of
Openhym and Sons.

Executed in New York, 1902

29

The John Fritz medal for Scientific or Industrial achievement, founded by the United Engineering Societies of America at the celebration of his seventieth birthday.

Executed in New York, 1902

30

Badge of the Monmouth County Historical Association.

Executed in New York, 1903

31

The Charles P. Daly medal for geographical research.

Executed in New York, 1903

32

The Lloyd McKim Garrison medal for proficiency in English Literature. Harvard University.

Executed in New York, 1903

33

Seal of the New York Public Library.

Executed in New York, 1903

34

Amerigo Vespucci plaque. The first of a series of medals commemorating noted men in the history of America, issued by the American Numismatic Society.

Executed in New York, 1903

35

Portrait plaque of Mrs. S. Oettinger.
Executed in New York, 1903

36

Portrait plaque of Samuel P. Avery,
Esq.
Executed in New York, 1903

37

Portrait plaque of Collis P. Hunt-
ington, Esq. Reduction.
Executed in New York, 1904

38

Seal of the Fine Arts Federation of
New York.
Executed in New York, 1904

39

Commemorative plaque of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the University of Wisconsin.

Executed in New York, 1904

40 .

Souvenir plaque of the National Arts Club, New York.

Executed in New York, 1904

41

Centennial medal of the New York Historical Society.

Executed in New York, 1904

42

The James McNeill Whistler plaque commemorating the collective ex-

hibitions of his works given in Boston, London and Paris.

Executed in Paris, 1905

43

Portrait plaque of Solomon Loeb, Esq. Reduction.

Executed in Paris, 1905

44

Portrait plaque of Dr. Dumontier.

Executed in Paris, 1905

45

Reduction of the Dumontier plaque.

46

The Frederick Samuel Tallmadge medal for the New York Society of the Sons of the Revolution.

Executed in Paris, 1906

47

Model of the obverse of the Tall-
madge medal.

48

Portrait plaque of Dr. Otto Bins-
wanger.

Executed in Paris, 1906

49

Portrait of Mme. H.

Executed in Paris, 1906

50

Portrait plaque of Dr. Rabutot.

Executed in Paris, 1906

51

Portrait plaque of Dr. Rupert Norton.

Executed in Paris, 1906

52

The John Paul Jones plaque issued by the American Numismatic Society. The second of the series of noted men connected with the history of America.

Executed in Paris, 1906

53

Portrait of F. S. Lamb.

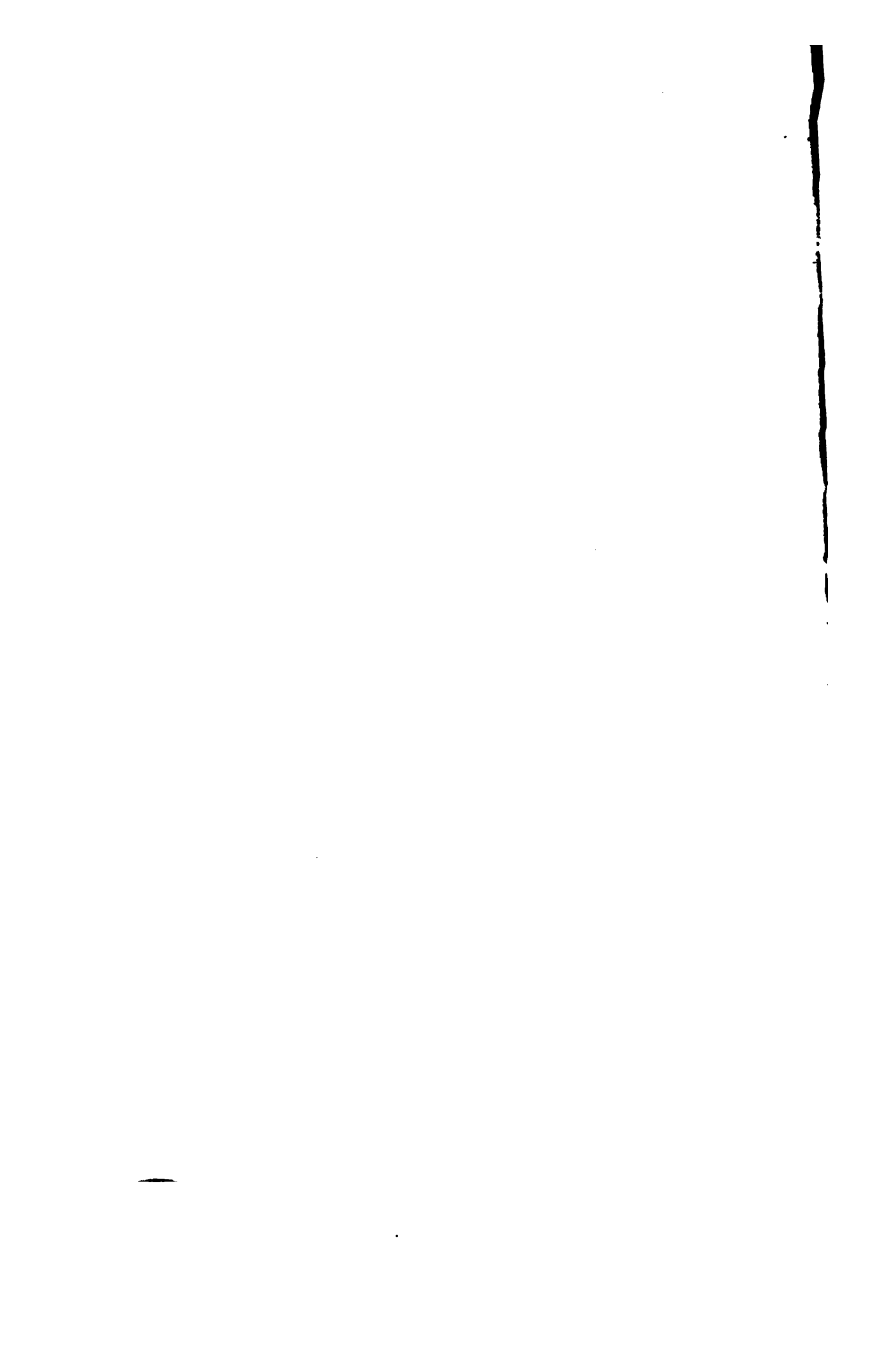
Executed in New York, 1907

54

Frame containing 27 pieces.









X

